

Message Text

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TAGS: MILI, MPOL, MARR, CA

SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER DANSON COMMENTS ON AWACS

1. LOCAL PRESS HAS REPORTED STATEMENTS BY CANADIAN DEFENSE MINISTER BARNEY DANSON IN BRUSSELS REGARDING CANADA'S SHARE OF AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SYSTEM. ACCORDING TO THESE REPORTS, DANSON TOLD REPORTERS THAT 1) CANADA'S SHARE OF THE COSTS WOULD BE ABOUT \$200 MILLION SPREAD OVER SEVERAL YEARS; 2) CANADA WOULD GET SOME CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS; 3) CANADA MUST IN THE MEANTIME DECIDE WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE WITH THE U.S. IN A NORTH AMERICAN AIRBORNE SCHEME. HOWEVER, DANSON APPARENTLY EMPHASIZED THAT "THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAS MADE NO DECISION -- NOT EVEN IN PRINCIPLE -- TO JOIN NORTH AMERICAN SYSTEM ... ONE FACTOR IN THE DECISION WILL BE THE KIND AND COST OF CANADIAN INVOLVEMENT. ROLES COULD RANGE FROM MERELY SUPPLYING GROUND SUPPORT TO FLYING PLANES". ACCORDING TO DANSON, THESE ISSUES WILL HAVE TO BE SETTLED BEFORE CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM CAN BE DECIDED.

2. PRESS STORIES ALSO INDICATE THAT DANSON IS REASSESSING CANADIAN COMMITMENT UNDER NATO TO SUPPLY FORCES TO THE ALLIANCE'S NORTHERN FLANK IN CASE OF EMERGENCY. DANSON ALLEGEDLY DOES NOT WANT TO EXPOSE CANADIAN TROOPS TO "VAGUE SITUATIONS" AND WONDERS IF CANADIAN FORCES SHOULD NOT BE CONCENTRATED IN ONE AREA.

ENDERS

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